

### *Amends Water Bill to Help Tribes Receive Funding, Technical Assistance*

Washington, DC – Today, the House of Representatives passed the Water Quality Investment Act of 2009, which will create jobs and improve water quality across America. Rep. Ben Ray Luján submitted an amendment to the legislation that would authorize new technical assistance grants for water and wastewater projects for tribal communities. Language from the Luján Amendment was included in the Manager's Amendment to the legislation. Rep. Luján voted in favor of the bill, which passed the House of Representatives 317 to 101.

"Water infrastructure is critically important for communities across New Mexico, but particularly for our tribal communities," said Rep. Luján. "By investing in water infrastructure, we can improve water quality and delivery, and we can create jobs throughout the country--including in rural communities like those in New Mexico."

The Water Quality Investment Act of 2009 addresses America's need for infrastructure by investing \$18.7 billion over five years in wastewater infrastructure and other efforts to improve water quality. The legislation authorizes \$13.8 billion in federal grants over five years to capitalize Clean Water State Revolving Funds and provides low-interest loans to communities for wastewater infrastructure. Additional funding is authorized through several other programs that address the water needs of communities.

Rep. Luján's amendment authorizes non-profits to provide tribal governments with new federally funded grants for water infrastructure. Tribes across the nation have many problems with ensuring water quality for tribal residents. Often water and wastewater systems are hard to construct or maintain due to a lack of availability of funding for tribal governments to construct such systems.

"By including tribal governments along with municipal and state governments in the bill, we will provide these often underserved communities with assistance and funding to invest in water infrastructure," said Rep. Luján. "Tribal governments will be able to benefit from technical assistance, training, planning, developing and acquisition of financing for water system projects that will protect water quality and create jobs."

